



CAREER GUIDANCE AND STUDENTS' CAREER CHOICE IN THE KUMBA MUNICIPALITY, MEME DIVISION, CAMEROON

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Abstract:

This study investigated the extent to which career guidance impacts students' career choice in the Kumba municipality in Meme Division of the South West Region of Cameroon. The objectives were three fold; to determine the role of career information on students' career choice, to evaluate the extent to which career fairs impacted students' career choice and to find out whether career days influenced students' career choice. The theoretical framework adopted for this study was the Holland's theory of vocational personalities in work environment which helped to identify each student's compatible career. The research design used for this study was the descriptive survey method. The sample for this study comprised 100 respondents (secondary school students) selected using the simple random sampling technique. Three secondary schools were purposively selected because they were renowned with established and functional guidance and counselling services. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics (frequency distributions tables, charts, and percentages) and inferential statistics. The main findings revealed that career information had a significant effect on students' career choice; that career fairs had a significant impact on students' career choices; and that career days had a significant effect on students' career choices. The study then recommended that career guidance activities should be organized in schools to help students determine career goals, understand the world of work and develop career management skills so as to be able to make appropriate informed choices.

Keywords: career guidance, career choice, career information, career fairs and career days

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1. Introduction

Career selection is one of the many important choices students will make in determining future plans. This decision would impact them throughout their lives. Brown (2002) describes the process of choosing a career as one of estimating one's ability and values, estimating the skills and abilities required for success in a given occupation, and estimating the work values that will be satisfied by the various occupational alternatives available. The essence of who the student is will revolve around what the student wants to do with their life-long work (Borchert, 2002).

Parents, teachers, the society and the government as a whole recognize the need for proper career guidance and development. Perry (2006) reports that career choices are pivotal points in adolescents' lives. So no matter if they are headed for work or for college, there are factors that affect their career decisions. Career development, for most people, is a lifelong process of engaging the work world through choosing among employment opportunities made available to them. Each individual undertaking the process is influenced by several factors, including the context in which they live, their personal aptitudes, and educational attainment (Bandura, Barbaranelli, Caprara, & Pastorelli, 2001). Muraguri (2011) states that an individual's choice of career is likely to be influenced by several factors including personal and cultural values, family background, career expectations and career guidance. Some also make career decisions by taking the path of least resistance for example, following a career path advocated by their parents or following in the footsteps of an elder sibling (Carlos, Pessoa, Câmara, Perrier, & De Figueiredo, 2009). According to Kerka (2000), career choice is influenced by multiple factors including personality, interests, self-concept, cultural identity, globalization, socialization, role model, social support and available resources such as information and financial.

Numerous studies show that fresh students all over the world are usually faced with a dilemma in making a career choice decision in their lives (Issa & Nwalo, 2008; Macgregor, 2007; McMahon & Watson, 2005, Cherian, 1991). In his study of career choice of Nigerian youths, Salami (1999) found that many youths made wrong career choices due to ignorance, inexperience, peer pressure, advice from friends, parents and teachers, or as a result of prestige attached to certain jobs without adequate vocational guidance and career counselling. Therefore, the concept of career development involves the person's creation of a career pattern, decision making style, integration of life roles, values expression, and life-roles self-concepts (Herr, Cramer, & Niles, 2004). In a country like Cameroon, the issue of career choice is especially linked to the problem of orientation. Students get into any career then later, they realize that they can't cope with the selection and the result of this selection is frustration, dissatisfaction and low productivity. Choosing a career involves many factors. Most students who are not aware of these factors find themselves making wrong career choices. Each individual involved in this process is influenced by many factors including: the context in which he lives, his personal aptitude and educational attainment (Bandura, Barbarianalli, Caprara & Pastorelli, 2001). Other salient and non-negligible determinants include

subject choice and combination, training requirements, personality type, the knowledge of opportunities of career and interest.

Subject choice and combination in forms 5 and lower sixth (L6) should be done efficiently, reason being that these subjects are the backbone of one's future life and career satisfaction. The subject in which students specialize in, represent the knowledge gained in specific areas of study that will enable them to write and succeed in an examination. However, it has been observed that most of the choices of subject combination made by students are influenced by their peers and parents. Thus, a wrong choice of subject within this period of life could destroy one's career choice, which in turn may affect the life of that student. In addition to the knowledge they have acquired during the school year, they should also move to the training requirement.

To become a professional in specific jobs or vocation requires students to undergo training. It is noticed that students lack the required aptitude that can easily enable them to obtain a particular job. Education or training enables the individual to acquire skills, knowledge, attitudes and abilities that can help him to do his present work effectively and also prepare him for higher level (Attieku, Dorkey, Marfo, Yiadom & Tekyi, 2006). Thus, choosing a career without thinking of what is required in terms of aptitude is wrong. Training is not the sole requirement; students also need to know their personality type. Some careers demand that you have the personality to match the qualities of the occupation. This is so because certain careers go along with certain human qualities and attitudes. There are people who are patient, tolerant, being critical, self-confident, dynamic, enduring, hardworking, etc. These human qualities portray an individual's personality and equally correspond to different occupations. Imagine an individual who is an articulate speaker, likes reading novels and artistic, he/she can develop a career in journalism or public relations.

Splaver (1977) argued that, "*personality*" plays an important role in the choosing of a career and points out the need for every individual "*to have a good understanding of yourself, your personality, if you are to make intelligent career plans*". The lack of knowledge on appropriate human qualities that is observed among students in secondary school can lead them to make a wrong career choice. Knowledge of the three factors above will be effective if students know about the job opportunities. Job opportunities are jobs that maybe possible for a person to pursue in their field or line of work. The availability of job may be based on subjects' choice, required training, interest and human qualities. There are students who are not aware of where jobs are available for them to apply. And this makes it difficult for them to acquire a job. Sometimes they may not be aware of the job requirements and employment conditions. They would therefore need information and appropriate insight on the different jobs that are available and opportunities that are offered. Knowing about job opportunities is very necessary but it is always worthwhile going in for what you like.

One's interest in an activity is a major determinant factor of success. Personal interest would enable a person to put in his/her best in it. Students in secondary school choose careers without proper regard to their interest about the career. It is therefore necessary for them to know about their interests and see how it matches with their

career choices. The lack of knowledge of interest leads to a wrong choice of career that is why career guidance could play a significant role. To resolve these situations, the guidance counsellor as a source of first-hand information for career choice and as an expert has to clarify the educational and career paths through the use of guidance and counselling services that could help students discover the school programmes and the career that fits better with their aptitudes, abilities, personality and interest. To enable such students develop their potentials, the school guidance and counselling programme must be effective to guide them regarding the requirement of specific occupations, services of the guidance and counsellors are highly required as their efforts assist in placing talents where it is mostly needed. However, this study focused on the role of career information, career fairs and career days on the occupational choices made by secondary school students. Formal counselling has a predominant role here.

Formal guidance and counselling can be traced to America in the 1890s and the early 1900s. Frank Parson is known as the father of vocational guidance movement. He established the vocation bureau in Boston in 1908 and stimulated the concept of career guidance. Primarily, he pointed out that a clear understanding of the individual's skills, interests and limitations was necessary. Secondly, the requirements and conditions for various types of jobs are essential. Finally, a capacity to accommodate these two would lead to successful guidance (Gothard, Mignot, Offer & Ruff, 2001).

In the case of Cameroon, the evolution of guidance and counselling in Cameroon can be broken down into three interrelated areas. Firstly, the era of searching of counselling movement characterized by the attempt to achieve change with a strong bias to the selection of appropriate manpower. Furthermore, there was a rise in the placement of counselling services to the government unit or authority. Secondly, the era of identity marked by the separation of career and educational challenges from those of labour and employment. While labour and employment remained within the competence of the Ministry of Labour, a guidance bureau was created within the Planning services of the Ministry of National Education for Career and Educational Problems. Thirdly, the era of innovations or new directions marked by the opening of guidance counselling training options within the Department of Science of Education at the Higher Teacher Training College in Yaoundé. Although guidance and counselling is considered as the third pillar of the Cameroonian educational system after pedagogy and school administration, its impact on Cameroonian secondary schools remains minimal for many reasons such as: lack of trained school counsellors, lack of sufficient time and lack of facilities and orientation materials. In addition, most students and teachers in secondary schools are still unclear on the importance of counselling in school milieu.

2. The Problem

Many Countries, Cameroon inclusive, spend a lot of resources in education because it is the key to sustainable development and growth. In doing this there should be a well thought out link between education and progression into careers and the world of

work. Career choice has meaning in the context of employability demands in a knowledge economy. It is therefore very important to have an empirical understanding of career guidance and the influence on students' choice of particular careers. Ignorance about one's career is not delightful and planning one's career is better than leaving it to chance or fate. Choosing a career is difficult and many students are unable to express any choice of career (Mwai, 2011), thus the need to provide them with formal guidance on this.

A significant point in adolescents' lives involves the career choice that they make while in high school as they approach the young adulthood stage of their lives. Oftentimes, the family and community regard this point in time as a mere start to workplace readiness. However, making this decision is quite challenging for the adolescent. Learners are confronted with the need to choose an academic major as well as to develop prospective career goals. Regardless of great assistance from families, peers, government agencies and non-government agencies, many young people encounter difficulties in the transition from the world of school to that of work. To make appropriate choices one has to be well informed. Schools have guidance counsellors who provide career information to learners to enable them make appropriate career choices. To this end, counsellors organise career explorations, field trips, career information, career fairs career days, to name a few. In this light one would wonder if career guidance is effectively carried out in schools given the very large number of jobless Cameroonians. Thus, this study seeks to find out if students' career choice is impacted by career guidance through career information, career fairs and career days rendered in our schools.

2.1 Main Research Objective

To investigate the extent which career guidance impact students' career choices.

2.2 Specific Research Objectives

The specific research objectives were threefold:

- To determine the role of career information on students' career choice.
- To evaluate the extent to which career fairs impact students' career choice.
- To find out whether career days influence students' career choice.

2.3 Main Research question

To what extent does career guidance impact students' career choices?

2.4 Specific Research Questions

Three research questions were formulated for the study:

- To what extent does career information impact students' career choice?
- To what extent do career fairs impact students' career choice?
- To what extent do career days influence students' career choice?

2.5 General Hypothesis

Ha: There is a significant relationship between career guidance and career choice.

Ho: There is no significant relationship between career guidance and career choice.

2.6 Specific Research Hypotheses

Ha1: There is a significant relationship between career information and career choice.

Ho1: There is no significant relationship between career information and career choice.

Ha2: There is a significant relationship between career fairs and career choice.

Ho2: There is no significant relationship between career fairs and career choice.

Ha3: There is a significant relationship between career days and career choice.

Ho3: There is no significant relationship between career days and career choice.

3. Theoretical Framework

3.1 John Holland's Theory of Vocational Personalities (1966)

Holland (1919-2008), an Emeritus Professor of Sociology at John Hopkins University, is a psychologist who devoted his professional life to research on career choice and satisfaction. Till date, three revisions came to specify his ideas (1966, 1973 and 1985). Basically, Holland's (1985a) theory is simple in its structure and important concepts. He assumes that people can be categorized according to their degree of resemblance to any of the six vocational personality types, that is, the realistic, investigative, artistic, social, enterprising and conventional types. To evaluate this resemblance, it is good to compare traits, interests, values and abilities of an individual with those of each vocational type which represents a theoretical type. The primary vocational type is that which an individual resembles more and the personality profile is made up of six types of combination, in descending order of resemblance. Holland (1985a) stipulates that the vocational behaviour of an individual results from the interaction between its personality and its work environment. The classification of six vocational types therefore transposes itself for the environments in the same way. One can determine the predominant type of a work environment or studies listing the primary vocational type of all those who compose it, the more frequently type encountered indicating the type of the environment.

Five basic principles can essentially describe the Holland's theory (1985a). The first of these principles states that, the choice of a profession represents more than a simple interest but rather constitutes an expression of personality. From this first principle, the second is established with the assumption that, an inventory of interests is in fact an inventory of personality. This Inventory (VPI - Vocational Preference Inventory), translated into French assumption leads Holland (1985b) to build the Vocational Preference the same year by Chevrier and Osten (1985) under the title of *Inventaire de Preferences Professionnelles (IPP)* to measure the vocational types and extract the personality profile of the respondent. This instrument collects only job titles. According to these first two principles, an occupation is not only a set of functions to perform but represents a particular life style in a specific work environment as well as a

role and a status aimed. Consequently, the attraction for certain professions gives much information about the motivation and knowledge of the person.

The third premise holds that, the perception that people have of a profession is often stable and valid. Holland (1985a) indeed sustains that, many people have similar perceptions of occupations. This principle is also important in the rationale that guided the construction of the Vocational Preference Inventory.

The fourth principle states that, several common points manifest themselves amongst people of the same profession. Holland (1985a) supposes even that, these people have life stories that are alike, leading them to see situations from a similar perspective and respond similarly.

The last principle is a major point of Holland's theory (1985a) as it classifies that, the interaction between an individual and his/her work environment is decisive to satisfaction, stability, persistence and the success of that person. This is what Holland (1985a) calls congruence. It is present when there is harmonization between the vocational type of the individual and that of his/her workplace.

A closer view of all these principles, emphasis that, the choice of career of an individual represents only a precise moment of his life. Bujold (1989) observed that, this takes little account of a person's development process. However, some authors have addressed the theory of Holland (1995a) with a more developmental perspective, highlighting on the possible changes in the vocational interests of a person on a shorter or longer period or on the evolution of the vocational types in time. This is the case of Riverin-Simard (1996) who, through interviews with nearly 1,000 workers representing the six vocational types defined by Holland (1985a) and being in various stages of their career, cleared a progression of particular career for each vocational type. Works of Riverin-Simard (1996) amongst others, thus show that it is possible to use Holland's (1995a) theory in a less static way than Bujold (1989) stresses it.

In spite of criticisms made against this theory, it emerges that, the Holland (1985a) theory of professional choice is one of the most used by career advisers and guidance counsellors in career choice. Holland's typology constitutes the world's reference on academic and professional orientation. Therefore, the use of Vocational Preference Inventory by the counsellor during individual or group counselling process could help students make adequate career choices that fits better to their interest, personality and capacity given the fact that, these decisions bear many considerations and consequences for the future. In fact, these choices can prove to be crucial for self-esteem, self-actualization, the feeling of satisfaction and the physical and psychological health of the individual. In school, counsellors are expected to help learners identify and understand their different personality types given the impact in making occupational choices, thus the relevance of this theory in inspiring this study.

3.2 Social Cognitive Theory

The social cognitive theory (SCT) developed by Albert Bandura in 1986, purports that contextual variables such as social support, which includes friends, family and relatives influence the career choice of individuals (Choo, Norsiah & Tan, 2012:22). Social

persuasion also affects an individual's choice of career (Lent, Brown & Hacket, 1994) because there is dialogue between children and their environment. Similarly, Bandura posited that when individuals watch their peers succeeding, they are likely to believe that they can also succeed (Mills, 2009:9). In this career development model, a person's background (or contextual factors) and individual characteristics influence his/her learning experiences and consequently self-efficacy (Tang, Pan, Newmeyer, 2008:285).

According to Bandura (1989:1) and Alexander, Seabi and Bischoff (2010:497), because of the bi-directionality of influence between behaviour and environmental circumstances, people are both products and producers of their environment. They affect the nature of their experience through selection and creation of situations. This is in line with the SCT which states that realistic encouragement that leads people to exert greater effort is likely to bring success in career development (Bandura, 1988:285). It is therefore relevant to examine the environment that promotes development in students' quest for sustainable career. The theory recognizes both the cognitive and environmental factors although this study concentrates more on environmental factors. Social cognitive theory focuses on several cognitive variables (self-efficacy, outcome expectations and goals) and how these variables interact with other aspects of the person and his/her environment (for example, gender, ethnicity, social support and barriers) to shape the course of career development (Lent, Brown, & Hacket, 1994). According to Bandura (2002:269), the theory distinguishes three modes of agency: a) personal agency exercised individually; b) proxy agency in which people secure desired outcomes by influencing others to act on their behalf; and c) collective agency in which people act in concert to shape their futures. Students in high school are influenced by these three modes when they choose careers, among many variables that they feel are appropriate for them. The environment which also imposes itself on them also impacts their choice of career. Formal career guidance is therefore a crucial environmental determinant for appropriate choice of an occupation through occupational information, career fairs and career days which was the focus of this study.

While some career days have informational workshops, others feature recruiters from companies who meet with job seekers. The recruiters' purpose is to "sell" their company, answer questions about the hiring process and starting salaries and collect resumes. It is very important for students to obtain a list of the companies that will be represented and research them. This is because a meeting with the recruiter won't last longer thus; a student needs a quick pitch about why he/she is qualified to work there. A successful chat can sometimes lead to an interview (Kariuki, 2008).

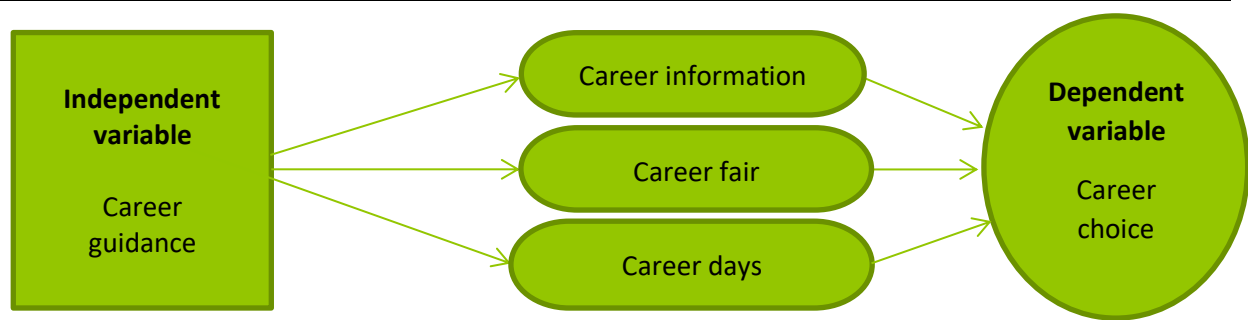


Figure 1: Conceptual Diagram showing the relationship between the main Variables of the Study

Figure one demonstrates the schematic representation of the relationship between career guidance comprising career information, career fairs and career days; and career choice of the study. Career information, career fairs and career days are career guidance services or programs that impact on career choice. This implies that if the counsellor effectively and appropriately renders the career guidance service then the learner would have it easy in making informed career choices that would bring him/her, satisfaction, happiness, self-fulfilment and achievement.

Empirically, Mabula (2012) carried out a study on Career Services Provision to Secondary School Students in Tanzania. The purpose of this study was to examine the status of career services provision and its role on career decision making among high school students in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania by comparing career services in government and international schools. Specifically, the study intended to identify the career programs available to students in school, students' career knowledge and the contribution of career programs to students' career decision making. The study was conducted in selected six secondary schools using a randomly selected sample of 322 students. The study employed both qualitative and quantitative research approaches. With quantitative approach, the cross section survey research design was used. The results revealed that career services provision in government schools in the region was inadequate. This was evident in that, the majority of high school students in government schools had less exposure to career programs and limited sources to career information. Also, students had low level of knowledge in career options available in the world of work, the condition which force these students to use culture orientation and social influence in their process of career decision making. The condition is different for international school students who demonstrate good exposure to various career programs and better knowledge in various career options. It was therefore concluded that, career services provision in international schools is to some degree a reality as opposed to government schools where the career services provision was still a dream.

Kimiti and Nwova (2012) carried out a study under on the dilemma of career choice: A case study of Kenyan secondary school students". The purpose of this study was to investigate the variables that influence career choice among secondary school students in Kenya. The study was guided by two objectives: to determine the influence

of peer groups on students' career choice at secondary school level and to determine the impact of career guidance and information on students' career choice. The study adopted the survey design. Purposive and random sampling techniques were used to select the sample of the study. The sample of the study comprised of 24 teacher-counsellors and 240 form four students in twelve selected schools in Machakos and Kitui Counties, Kenya. Two data collection instruments were used for this study, teachers' and students' questionnaires. The data was analysed by the use of frequencies and percentages. The results of the study revealed that only 17.50% of the student respondents stated that they were influenced by their peers when choosing their future career. Majority of the student respondents (89.5%) indicated that the provision of career guidance and information helped them to make better decisions in choosing their career. He therefore found out that career guidance services helped learners to make suitable career decisions.

4. Research Methodology

This study adopted the descriptive research design to investigate the extent to which career guidance impacted students' career choice. This design enabled the investigator to reach large number of respondents in order to obtain the desired representative sample of the target population to deduce the perception of the entire population. The study was carried out in Meme Division, specifically in the Kumba Municipality of the South West Region of Cameroon. This area was selected as the site for the study primarily because it was in the researchers' opinion more accessible than other areas. Secondly, given the fact that the students were also preoccupied during this period with their progress in terms of career choice, the researchers therefore attempted to find out scientifically the issues acting on their career choice. As a whole, Kumba was also found appropriate because it had a high rate of students going to school. This was found to be a critical factor in the generalization of findings to other schools.

A sample of 100 students was drawn from three selected secondary schools in the Kumba Municipality.

Table 1: Distribution of Population

Schools	Target Population	Accessible Sample Population
CCAS Kumba	400	100 50
GBHS Kumba	257	50 25
SOFATI Kumba	243	55 25
Grand Total	900	205 100

Table one represents the target and accessible population of this study. The target population comprised 900 students of Cameroon College of Arts and Science (CCAS), Government Bilingual High School (GBHS) and SOFATI Kumba while the accessible population comprised 205 from which a sample of 100 students was drawn.

4.1 Sampling Techniques and Construction of Instrument for Data Collection

The sample of 100 students was selected from three schools using the simple random sampling technique. The schools were purposively selected because they were well-known to run established and functional guidance and counselling services. According to Linclon and Guba (2007) the rationale for purposive sampling is that the respondents possessed the information that meet the purpose of the study. So the respondents who filled the questionnaire were the final year students who were at the point of choosing careers or further training that meets their career aspirations. However, the school and the category of students of this study were selected according to the following criteria: to be enrolled in the above selected secondary schools in Kumba; be in Upper sixth no matter the sex; be available on campus on the day of the exercise; and be willing to participate in the exercise. Those selected and who were willing to take part in the exercise were given the questionnaire to respond to items on the impact of career information, career fairs and career days in students' career choice.

The instrument used to collect data was a five-point Likert scale type students' questionnaire constructed by the researchers. The questionnaire comprised closed-ended questionnaire items which with five varied options: "Agree" "Strongly Agree", "Disagree" and "Strongly Disagree", "Not Sure".

4.2 Method of Data Analysis

Data was analysed using Strata 14 released on April 7, 2015. It is a multi-purpose statistical package to help one explore, summarize and analyse data sets. Differential statistics (frequency tables, percentages, graphs and cross tabulations) and inferential statistics were used to analyse data.

4.3 Ethical Considerations

Consent was given for the collection of data by the school authorities and classroom teachers on behalf of the students since they take custody over them during school hours. The investigators decided not to give any details about the research beforehand in order to avoid answers prepared in advance as well as other factors that could distort the study data. An introductory letter was included at the beginning of the questionnaire so that participants would have knowledge on why the research was being carried out. To preserve the anonymity of the participants, they were not required to write their names on the questionnaire and were also assured of confidentiality of their responses. They were assured that the instrument was not a test and would not affect their academic performance.

5. Results and Interpretation

Research objective 1: To what extent does career information impact students' career choice?

Table 2: Respondents' Appreciation of Impact of Career Information on their Career Choice

Item	SA		A		D		SD		NS	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
The labour market comprises of several jobs	43	43.0	19	19.0	17	17.0	11	11.0	10	10.0
Career information directs me on the educational path to pursue in order to make a sound career choice	29	29.0	23	23.0	15	15.0	22	22.0	11	11.0
I enjoy career information lessons the school provides	41	41.0	19	19.0	29	29.0	11	11.0	3	3.0
Career information in school is concerned with clearing students' career confusion	57	57.0	23	23.0	13	13.0	7	7.0	0	0.0
Career information helps me to acquire knowledge and skills about certain careers	47	47.0	35	35.0	17	17.0	0.0	0.0	1	1.0

Table two shows that out of 100 respondents who participated in the study, 62% were positive that the labour market comprised of several jobs, 28% were negative, and 10% were not sure. A majority (52%) were affirmative that career information directs them on the educational path to pursue in order to make a sound career, meanwhile 37% were negative, and 11% were not sure. Furthermore, a very significant majority (60%) affirmed that they enjoyed career information lessons provided by the school, meanwhile 40% were negative and a meagre 3% were not sure. More so, the greater majority (80%) affirmed that career information in school is concerned with clearing students' career confusion; meanwhile 20% were negative with no respondent being indifferent. Some students testified that career information helped them to avoid making many wrong and hasty choices. Lastly, 82% affirmed that career information helped them to acquire knowledge and skills about certain careers, meanwhile 17% were negative and only 1% was unsure. From respondent's reactions it was revealed that all the students had at least participated in career/occupational information talks presented in school. Apparently, this could be due to the fact that resident school counsellors in Cameroon are required by regulations in force to put in a period of class time in each class weekly. Part of the time is used to provide career information. This is a pointer to the significant positive impact of career information on students' career choices.

Research objective 2: To what extent do career fairs impact students' career choice?

Table 3: Respondents' Appreciation of Impact of Career Fairs and Students' Career Choice

Item	SA		A		D		SD		NS	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
I have participated in career fairs	12	12.0	19	19.0	16	16.0	29	29.0	24	24.0
Mentors in forms of counsellors and professionals provide students with an introductory aspects of profession	36	36.0	27	27.0	23	23.0	10	10.0	4	4.0
I got an opportunity to get the contact of a potential employer during career fairs for	28	28.0	17	17.0	24	24.0	25	25.0	6	6.0

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further job opening										
During job fairs a good explanation on work needed is explained by the recruiter	15	15.0	24	24.0	13	13.0	27	27.0	21	21.0
I made a good impression to potential employers by speaking face to face with one another	20	20.0	29	29.0	28	28.0	11	11.0	12	12.0

Table three above shows that out of 100 respondents who participated in the study, 31% affirmed that they had participated in career fairs, meanwhile 45% were negative, and 24% were not sure. Some students said they had never attended a job fair before so they were ignorant and not really sure on how it was being done. A good percentage (49%) of respondents affirmed that they made a good impression to potential employers by speaking face to face with them, while 39% were negative and, only 12% were not sure. The responses on the impact of career fairs on career choice were generally positive, thus pointing to its importance.

Research objective 3: To what extent do career days influence students' career choice?

Table 4: Respondents' Appreciation of Impact Career Days and Students' Career Choice

Item	SA		A		D		SD		NS	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
School career days influenced my career choice	25	25.0	24	24.0	17	17.0	28	28.0	6	6.0
Career experts are invited to the school to offer career guidance lessons	27	27.0	13	13.0	24	24.0	15	15.0	21	21.0
School career days cleared career confusion that I had	29	29.0	16	16.0	19	19.0	12	12.0	24	24.0
School career days widened my horizon on careers	10	10.0	23	23.0	27	27.0	36	36.0	4	4.0
I feel a sense of belonging in the career path I am about to pursue	11	11.0	28	28.0	29	29.0	20	20.0	12	12.0

Table four above shows that out of 100 respondents who participated in the study, most (49%) were positive that school career days influenced their career choice, while 45% were negative, and only 6% were not sure. Forty-five (45%) affirmed that school career days cleared career confusions that they had, meanwhile 31% were negative and 24% were indifferent. As could be seen, most respondents were of the opinion that school career days were useful in their choice of career. A good number were indifferent because some resident counsellors do not conduct all these activities in their schools. In a discussion with the students it turned out that some had rarely experienced some of the activities.

5.1 Verification of Hypotheses

This presentation covers the verification of the hypotheses and interpretation of results. The first research question was to find out how career information affects students' career choice. The hypothesis formulated was:

Ha1: There is a significant relationship between career information and career choice.

Ho1: There is no significant relationship between career information and career choice.

A one-sample t-test was conducted at 0.05 level of significance to evaluate whether the mean for this item was significantly different from the mean in general for a Likert scale of 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 which is 2.5. For the six items on career information and students' career choice, the expected mean would be $6 \times 2.5 = 15$. This mean (15) was used as the test value for the one-sample t-tests. The SPSS version 21.0 outputs are contained in table five below.

Table 5: One-Sample Statistics for Ho₁ Using Respondents' Responses

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Career information	100	17	3.166	.127

The table five above revealed that out of a sample size of 100 respondents the mean was 17 which were greater than the test value (15). From the mean score, it therefore showed that there was a significant influence of career information on students' career choice since the general mean for all the items was more than the test values as shown in table six below:

Table 6: One-Sample Test for Ho₁ Using Respondents' Responses

Variables	Test Value = 15					
	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Career information	-1.46	99	.03	-3.0	-3.51	-4.59

The analysis on table six revealed that, with alpha at 0.05, the mean (17) for the one-sample t-test was significantly different from the test value of 15 with $t = -1.46$, $df = 99$, $p = 0.03$ ($p < 0.05$) and the 95% confidence interval ranging from 11.49 (i.e. $15 + -3.51$) to 10.41 (i.e. $15 + -4.59$). The decision rule states that when p is less than the level of significance, we reject the null hypothesis and adopt the alternative. Therefore, the null hypothesis which stated that there was no significant relationship between career information and students' career choice was rejected at the 0.05 alpha levels. This there shows that there was significant effect of career information on students' career choice.

In the second hypothesis (Ho₂), the investigation was to find out the effects of career fairs on students' career choice. Hypothesis Ho₂ was used to verify this objective.

Ha2: There is a significant relationship between career fairs and career choice.

H02: There is no significant relationship between career fairs and career choice.

A one-sample t-test was conducted at 0.05 level of significance to evaluate whether the mean for this item was significantly different from the mean in general for a Likert scale of 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 which is 2.5. For the five items on career fairs and its impact on students' career choice, the expected mean would be $5 \times 2.5 = 12.5$. This mean (12.5) was used as the test value for the one-sample t-tests. The SPSS version 21.0 outputs are contained in table seven below.

Table 7: One-Sample Statistics for Ho₂ Using Respondents' Responses

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Dev	Std. Error Mean
Career fairs	100	18.03	3.122	.158

The table above reveals that out of a sample size of 100 the mean is 18.03 which is greater than the test value (12.5). From the mean score, it therefore shows that there was a significant relationship between career fairs and students' career choice, since the general mean for all the items is more than the test values.

Table 8: One-Sample Test for Ho₂ Using Respondents' Responses

Variable	Test Value = 12.5					
	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Career fairs	-2.1	99	.001	2.435	-2.32	-2.79

The analysis revealed that, with alpha at 0.05, the mean (18.03) for the one-sample t test was significantly different from the test value of 12.5 with $t = -2.10$, $df = 99$, $p = 0.001$ ($p < 0.05$) and the 95% confidence interval ranging from 10.18 (i.e. $12.5 + -2.32$) to 9.71 (i.e. $12.5 + -2.79$). The decision rule states that when p is less than the level of significance, we reject the null hypothesis and adopt the alternative. Therefore, the null hypothesis which stated that, there was no significant relationship between career fairs and students' career choice was rejected at the 0.05 alpha levels. This means that career fairs have a significant impact on students' career choice.

In the third hypothesis (Ho₂), the investigation was to find out the effects of career days and students' career choice. Hypothesis Ho₂ was used to verify this objective.

Ha3: There is a significant relationship between career days and career choice.

H03: There is no significant relationship between career days and career choice.

A one-sample t-test was conducted at 0.05 level of significance to evaluate whether the mean for this item was significantly different from the mean in general for a Likert scale of 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 which is 2.5. For the five items on career days and students' career choice, the expected mean would be $5 \times 2.5 = 12.5$. This mean (12.5) was used as the test value for the one-sample t-tests. The SPSS version 21.0 outputs are contained in table nine below.

Table 9: One-Sample Statistics for Ho₃ Using Respondents' Responses

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Career Days	100	15.05	3.101	.157

The table above reveals that out of a sample size of 100 the mean is 15.05 which is greater than the test value (12.5). This shows that career days have a significant effect on students' career choice as seen from the mean score and standard deviation in table 10 below.

Table 10: One-Sample Test for Ho₃ Using Respondents' Responses

Variable	Test Value = 12.5					
	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Career Days	-1.19	99	.000	-3.70	-3.03	-2.09

The analysis on table 10 shows that, with alpha at 0.05, the mean (15.05) for the one-sample t- test was significantly different from the test value of 12.5 with $t = -1.19$, $df = 99$, $p = 0.000$ ($p < 0.05$) and the 95% confidence interval ranging from 9.47 (i.e. $12.5 + -3.03$) to 9.60 (i.e. $12.5 + -2.09$). The decision rule states that when p is less than the level of significance, we reject the null hypothesis and adopt the alternative. Therefore, the null hypothesis which stated that, there was no significant relationship between Career days and students' career choice was rejected at 0.05 alpha levels. This means that Career days have a significant effect on students' career choice.

6. Discussion of Findings

The discussions were done in accordance with the research objectives of the study.

6.1 Impact of Career Information on Students' Career Choice

The first objective of this study was to determine the impact of career information on students' career choice. The findings reveal that, there is significant effect of career information on students' career choice. The findings reveal that majority of the respondents strongly affirm that they find career information modules very useful and instrumental in determining their career aspirations. This discovery confirms earlier findings of Atchoarena (2005) who assert that career information provides information and resources about courses, occupations and career paths. It comprises amongst others information on occupations, pathways in career realization, trends situations at the labour market, educational programs and options, educational institutions (both formal and informal), government and non-governmental programs and services and job perspectives. There are economic and social gains when students are supported to make effective career transition from secondary school to further education, training or employment. Career enlightenment or career information plays an imperative part in curriculum that supports students' interests, strengths and aspirations, students'

achievements, students at risk of poor outcomes, students making informed decisions about their subject choices and pathway and illuminates their goals for the future. At this junction, can one really undermine the salient role that career information or career enlightenment play in the choice of a future or prospective occupation?

In line with the benefit of career information to learners that vividly stand out in this study, Gunz & Heslin (2005) hold that career information involves developing knowledge, skills and attitudes through a planned program of learning experiences in education and training settings which will assist all students to make informed decisions about their study and/or options and enable effective participation in their working life. Therefore, it suffices to state here without fear of contradiction that career information provided by school and career counsellors in the context of career guidance positively enhances learners' choice of career. Thus, the need to lend adequate support by way of logistics, an enabling environment, and good working conditions for the effective and sustained pursuance of this vital service in our schools.

6.2 Impact of Career Fairs on Students' Career Choice

The second objective of this study was to establish the incidence of career fairs on students' career choice. The analysis revealed that career fairs have a significant impact on students' career choice. It turned out that a significant number of students got an opportunity to get the contacts of potential employers during career fairs for job openings. These findings were in line with Gysber's (1990) stance that college career fairs are a benefit to everyone involved: the recruiters, the students and the colleges. Career fairs are one of the few opportunities where recruiters and students (prospective employees) can meet and interact in person before a full formal interview. This is not to say the introductions at career fairs are not important, the first meeting in any business relationship is always important but the atmosphere creates the groundwork for a successful interaction.

Furthermore, some respondents firmly established that during job fairs a good explanation on work needed and work conditions are explained by the recruiter. This finding therefore corroborated the earlier opinion held by Hooley, Watts, Sultana and Neary (2013) that Career expositions usually include company or organization tables or booths where resumes can be collected and business cards exchanged. Often sponsored by career centres, and or schools, job fairs provide a convenient scene for students to meet employers and perform first interviews. This is also an opportunity for companies to meet with students and talk to them about their expectations from them as students and answer their potential questions such as the degree or work experience needed. It is therefore clear from the foregoing discussion that career fairs organized on school campuses by school or career counsellors in the context of career guidance positively impact the choices that students make of their careers. These fairs could enable students make appropriate and informed career decisions which could have lifelong optimistic effects on their life.

6.3 Impact of Career Days on Students' Career Choice

The third objective of this study was to find out the effect career days has on students' career choice. The analysis shows that career days have a significant effect on students' career choice. Most respondents solidly affirm that school career days clear career confusions that they have. This revelation upholds Michigan Construction Career Days (MICCD) observation that career days provide students with a dynamic and tangible experience that facilitates a connection between their academic pursuits and professional endeavours in the future. Since 2008, MICCD is Michigan's premiere construction career exploration event. Based on the National Career Day model, MICCD provides Michigan's young people a chance to experience construction up-close, getting the chance to use real tools, materials and heavy equipment under the direct guidance of construction professionals from all sectors of the industry. These young people will not only see what construction is, but learn of the training and education paths to secure the good paying jobs a career in construction provides. On career days, professionals talk to students on the various types of jobs available in the job market as well as the passageway to obtaining such jobs.

Respondents of this study attest that school career days widen and broaden students' horizon on careers. This confirms an earlier opinion held by Gysbers (1990) that during career days, students who participate in the job shadow experience gain first-hand knowledge about being a professional in a variety of industries such as: consulting, finance, management, architecture, healthcare, teaching, public relations and engineering. He further emphasized that many young teenagers behave well in school and do what they are told because they want to live up to the expectations of the adults in their lives. Career days therefore enable young learners to see that the expectations adults set should not exclusively be met because they were set by their elders but to see the purposefulness of their learning. At this early age, learners get to effectively reflect before becoming disillusioned with learning and many undesirable attitudes. This stance points to the relevance of career days organised in our school campuses for the clarification of prominent learners. School career days therefore have a positive incidence on students' career choice.

7. Conclusion

The main objective of the study was to investigate the extent which career guidance impacts students' career choice. The specific objectives were to determine the role of career information on students' career choice, to establish the extent to which career fairs impact students' career choice and to find out whether or not career days influence students' career choice. The findings reveal that career information provided by school and career counsellors in the context of career guidance positively enhances learners' choice of career; career fairs organized on school campuses by resident school or career counsellors in the context of career guidance positively impact the choices that students make of their careers as these fairs enable students make suitable and informed career decisions which could have lifelong optimistic effects on their life; and school career

days have a very positive incidence on students' career choice. Therefore, it suffices here to state that career guidance is an important environmental determinant in helping learners to select suitable occupational choices in their life.

7.1 Recommendations

Based on these important discoveries, it is thus recommended that career guidance activities such as career information, career fairs and career days be regularly and sustainably organised in schools to help students clarify their career goals, understand the world of work, broaden student's horizon on careers, help them gain first-hand knowledge about being a professional in a variety of fields and develop career management skills. A strong partnership should be established with other organisations that can work in collaboration with career guidance professionals to empower students on the making of informed appropriate career choices. Community members such as employers, alumni, parents and peers should be co-opted to provide occupational and educational advice and information.

- Also, Personal advice, guidance and counselling on career choices should be offered to assist students with decisions about initial course of study, courses of vocational training, further education and training, initial job choice, job change and work-force re-entry.
- The information and communication technology should be enhanced by the administration in schools such as Print-based, computer-based or on-line services to produce and disseminate information about jobs and careers, courses of study and vocational training to help individuals make right career choices.
- Career development and coaching should be done in line with the aspirations and desires of students, so that they develop expertise in what they admire, like and can devote time to learn. All in all, young people need career guidance to assist them take life decisions based on information and opportunity exposure.

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